

NOW Ireland Conference Focuses on Export and REFIT

The fourth NOW Ireland Conference will take place in just over two weeks time on November 15th in the Burlington Hotel in Dublin. As announced in October, the keynote speakers at the flagship event will be UK Minister of State for Energy, Charles Hendry MP and Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Pat Rabbitte TD.

In addition to these two political leaders, NOW Ireland have assembled some of the leaders from the offshore wind industry. Andy Kinsella, CEO of Offshore Energy with Mainstream Renewable Power and Rob Leonard, Director of European Development with Centrica will discuss their experiences in developing offshore projects. Sean O'Driscoll of Glen Dimplex will outline the very real job opportunities provided by the renewable energy sector.

David McVeigh of Harland and Wolff and Joe O'Neill of Belfast Harbour Authority will give their view of where Northern Ireland is in the offshore revolution and why they are pulling ahead of the South.

Delegates will hear an update on the foreshore legislation from George Burke, Principal Officer at the Department of Environment and Local Government. Barbara Nolan, Director of the European Commission in Ireland, will give the European view on key issues such as targets and the review of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan.

Details of the Conference are on the NOW Ireland website, www.nowireland.ie. Bookings can be made either online or by calling the NOW Ireland office at 042 9322952.

New UK Offshore scheme opens door for Irish exports

The announcement of the new funding Renewable Energy pricing regime in the United Kingdom may end up proving beneficial to Irish offshore wind projects.

Following an in depth review of all aspects of pricing supports, the Government have announced a comprehensive structure which will drive the development of UK renewables over the next two decades.

Offshore and Wave and Tidal are being seen as the big winners in the new funding system. Onshore wind is seen as suffering somewhat as the focus appears to be on the seas.

The decision by the UK Government to put in place a system which will pay 1.9 or 1.8 ROC (depending on build date) for offshore energy not only provides a viable return for investors, it also gives new certainty to the market. This stands in stark contrast to the delay and obfuscation which is currently hampering the application to the EU for an offshore Refit for Ireland.

While the announcement has given certainty to all, it may not bring good news to all UK developers. The new ROC may now impact on the viability of deeper water projects in Round 3. Industry insiders have expressed serious concern regarding the feasibility of some of the deeper projects at this level of support.

Any reduction in Round 3 development in the UK will leave a shortfall in the targets which our nearest neighbour must hit by 2020. The UK Energy Minister has already raised the issue of greater co-operation on energy matters. If some UK offshore projects in Round 3 become untenable it will increase the already very strong case for direct connection of 'non – domestic' offshore projects to the UK grid. This is likely to benefit Irish projects.

Lack of Clarity on REFIT position

The announcement made in relation to the ROC system in the UK has highlighted again, the failure of Ireland's government to submit an offshore Refit application to Brussels.

The Offshore Refit of 14c was first announced by Minister Eamon Ryan in 2008. Since that announcement nearly 4 years has passed, during which there has been many promises but no movement.

The success of the onshore wind industry in Ireland would not have happened without a pricing mechanism at its inception. Indeed most fossil fuels which are used in generation are heavily subsidised, including oil and gas and nuclear energy.

Offshore wind can be the basis of a huge energy export market for Ireland. Ireland has a substantial offshore wind resource, one far greater than its domestic energy requirement. By developing our renewable resources and particularly offshore wind, we can reduce imports of oil and gas by 6 billion euro and replace them with energy imports of 10 billion euro. In the process creating many thousands of jobs.
Continued overleaf.

Onshore wind will be the largest contributor to our RES target but it will not achieve our targets on its own. Financial issues - particularly for smaller developers, planning issues and challenges in relation to attaining firm access to grid will ensure that other generation types are required.

Ireland will require a basket of renewable energy technologies. Offshore will be a crucial element in that basket. But Offshore will not be available unless we make the same commitment to it that we have made to other technologies.

Refit is essential to kick-start this industry. We have had assurances for over three years that it would be implemented. The delay in doing so has already cost this economy jobs and further delays will soon call into question the viability of the industry.

NOW Ireland is in regular contact with officials and industry leaders in countries around Europe. None of these can understand how a country like Ireland can afford to ignore its opportunity. Of all the coastal countries in the North Atlantic and Baltic regions, Ireland stands virtually alone in its failure to instigate a support scheme for offshore wind energy.

We are approaching a turning point for the

industry. The Government must decide whether it is serious about economic growth and about developing a new export based economic opportunity. At present, their actions suggest they are not.

Work begins to link Ireland and UK Grids.

Eirgrid have begun the task of laying the sub-sea cable that will link Ireland and the UK. This 500 MW interconnector is a critical development in building the infrastructure necessary for Ireland to be an energy exporter.

The project involves 180km (112 miles) of electrical cable being laid in a trench beneath the Irish Sea between North Beach, Rush, in north Co Dublin, and Barkby Beach in northern Wales.

A further 80km of cable is being laid on land to link the connector - 46km of which is in Ireland - to converter stations on either side of the Irish Sea where the power is adapted to suit the relevant national energy grid.

All Irish renewable projects will look forward to the completion of this vital element in opening up new markets for Irish energy.

NOW Ireland – 4th Annual Conference

“Ireland – A Green Energy Exporter”

Tuesday, 15th November 2011, 9.30am – 2.15pm in the Burlington Hotel, Dublin

Speakers to Include

Joint Keynote Address by:

Pat Rabbitte, TD, Minister for Communication, Energy & Natural Resources
Charles Hendry, MP, Minister of State at the Department of Energy & Climate Change
Sean O’Driscoll, CEO, Glen Dimplex Group
David McVeigh, Sales Manager, Harland & Wolff
Joe O’Neill, Commercial Director, Belfast Harbour Authority
Andy Kinsella, CEO Offshore, Mainstream Renewable Power
George Burke, Principal Officer, Department of Environment
Barbara Nolan, Director, EU Commission in Ireland
Rob Leonard, Director European Business Development, Centrica
Aidan Forde, Director, Dublin Array

Delegate Fee €275

Associate Member €220

To make a booking call NOW Ireland @ 042 9322952 or book online at www.nowireland.ie